

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing data transport services, comprising the steps of:
 - a. providing a publicly-owned, high-capacity communications network;
 - 5 b. allowing connection of the communications network to service providers and paying customers; and
 - c. charging tolls for use of the communications network by the service providers and customers, without regard to the type or content of the data transmitted.
- 10 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the network comprises high-capacity fiber optic communication lines and end-user connections.
- 15 3. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of interconnecting the high-capacity communications network to other communications networks.
- 20 4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the service providers are selected from the group consisting of cable television companies, telecommunications companies, and internet service providers.
- 25 5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing a publicly-owned, high-capacity communications network comprises constructing a fiber optic network within a geographic region controlled by a governmental entity.
- 30 6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the governmental entity is selected from the group consisting of a city, a county, a special district, a state, and a nation.
7. A method according to claim 5, wherein the fiber optic network is constructed using public funds.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the fees collected from users of the network and service providers are used to meet costs associated with the network.
- 5 9. A method for providing a publicly-owned, high-capacity communications network, comprising the steps of:
 - a. contracting by a governmental organization to construct a high-capacity fiber optic communication network within an area served by the governmental organization;
 - 10 b. interconnecting the network to other networks in other areas;
 - c. allowing residents within the area to use the network and to obtain services over the network from any service provider; and
 - d. collecting service fees from users of the network and service providers.
- 15 10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the network comprises high-capacity fiber optic communication lines and end-user connections.
11. A method according to claim 9, wherein the service providers are selected from the group consisting of cable television companies,
20 telecommunications companies, and internet service providers.
12. A method according to claim 9, wherein the governmental organization is selected from the group consisting of a city, a county, a special district, a state, and a nation.
- 25 13. A method according to claim 9, wherein construction of the high-capacity fiber optic communication network is funded with public funds.
14. A method according to claim 9, wherein the fees collected from users of
30 the network and service providers are used to meet costs associated with the network.
15. A high-capacity communications network, comprising:

- a. an interconnected network of high-capacity fiber optic cable in a geographic region, configured to transport data without regard to the type or content thereof;
 - b. a plurality of service providers, interconnected to the network;
 - 5 c. a plurality of customers in the region, connected to the network and enabled to selectively receive services from any of the service providers.
- 10 16. A communications network according to claim 15, further comprising at least one connection to another communication network in another area.
- 15 17. A communications network according to claim 15, wherein the geographic region is a region selected from the group consisting of a city, a county, a special district, a plurality of counties, a state, and a nation.
18. A communications network according to claim 15, wherein the service providers are selected from the group consisting of cable television companies, telecommunications companies, and internet service providers.